

# **California's Reading Excellence Act Program**

## ***Request for Applications***

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Local Reading Improvement Grants  
Application Forms (attached packets)

Tutorial Assistance Grants (Application package to follow)

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# I. General Information

## **Background of the Reading Excellence Act**

### **The Reading Excellence Act**

Congress passed the Reading Excellence Act (REA) in October 1998, amending Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. It targets those students in kindergarten through third grade who face the greatest impediments to learning to read well—those from districts and schools with high poverty and low rates of student achievement. The Act has five major purposes:

1. To provide children with the readiness skills they need to learn to read once they enter school;
2. To teach every child to read by the end of third grade;
3. To improve the reading skills of students and the instructional practices of teachers and others who teach reading through the use of findings from scientifically-based reading research;
4. To expand the number of high-quality family literacy programs; and,
5. To provide early literacy intervention to reduce the number of children who are inappropriately referred to special education.

### **The REA Model—A Different Approach to Improving Reading**

The REA takes a very different approach than other federal legislation. To improve reading for young children it is directive, mandating specific program components. To encourage thoughtful development of implementation strategies, it is competitive, with states competing for grants and then holding their own competitions among districts for subgrants. To change teacher practice in K-3 classrooms, it requires that all strategies, materials, interventions, be based on scientifically-based research in reading.

The central premise of the REA is that there exists a body of scientifically-based research findings that indicate effective strategies to teach reading to young children and to prevent reading failure, and that these findings have not been widely adopted by states, districts, schools, and teachers.

The central problem that REA seeks to address is how to overcome the lack of implementation of these findings—how to effect broad change in reading instruction at the classroom level.

**To address this problem, the REA mandates specific activities that the state, districts and schools must provide:**

- Professional development activities designed to improve the reading instruction practice of teachers and other instructional staff;
- Early literacy intervention for children experiencing reading difficulties, including tutoring and other extended learning opportunities and kindergarten transition programs;
- Family literacy services such as parent and child interactive activities, early childhood education, adult literacy training, and parent education.

**The Act also stipulates that reading instruction must cover the following six dimensions of reading:**

The term “reading” means a complex system of deriving meaning from print that requires all of the following:

- A. The skills and knowledge to understand how phonemes, or speech sounds, are connected to print.
- B. The ability to decode unfamiliar words.
- C. The ability to read fluently—that is the ability to read orally with speed, accuracy, and proper expression.
- D. Sufficient background information and vocabulary to foster reading comprehension.
- E. The development of appropriate active strategies to construct meaning from print.
- F. The development and maintenance of a motivation to read.

Section 2252 (4), Reading Excellence Act

**The Act further requires the use of scientifically-based reading research when selecting reading instruction, content, and strategies:**

The REA requires that reading instruction be based on scientifically-based reading research and includes this definition:

“The term ‘scientifically-based reading research’—

- (A) Means the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading difficulties.
- (B) Shall include research that—
  - i. Employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;
  - ii. Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;
  - iii. Relies on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across evaluators and observers, and across multiple measurements and observations; and
  - iv. Has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparatively rigorous, objective, and scientific review.”

Section 2252(4), Reading Excellence Act

An authoritative synthesis of this research is found in *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (National Academy of Sciences - Catherine E. Snow, M. Susan Burns, and Peg Griffin, 1998). An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction is found in the *Report of the National Reading Panel* (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 1999). In addition, the *English-Language Arts Content Standards* and the *Reading/Language Arts Framework* are based on and incorporate many elements which have been subject to scientifically-based research.

This stipulation to use scientifically-based reading research does not require the selection of specific program models. Funded districts and schools will assess the reading research and identify specific content and instructional strategies to implement in grades K-3, with supporting family literacy activities for preschool and early elementary grades.

### **California's REA Program— Not Just Another Reading Initiative**

The objective of the REA is not merely to add an additional reading initiative to ongoing programs and practices, but rather to integrate research-based reading activities to build a comprehensive approach to turning around high poverty, low performing schools. While this grant provides funding specifically for use in improving reading instruction at the kindergarten through grade three level, the aim is to use the REA to create a schoolwide focus on reading/language arts.

California's REA Program targets those schools that have shown to be the most difficult to change—under-achieving schools with high levels of poverty.

This grant program differs from others in several ways, but primarily in the degree of commitment it requires on the part of participating districts and schools. In trying to bring about change in schools that are difficult to change, participation in the REA requires a willingness on the part of districts and schools to critically examine their current practice in reading/language arts and to commit to making major systemic changes to improve student reading achievement. Implementing these changes must begin in a relatively short amount of time.

Much of the research on school reform efforts point to a time frame of at least 5-7 years in order to bring about significant change. Participation in the REA requires that schools initiate and implement change strategies in a shorter time frame. The target student population, struggling readers in grades K-3, need immediate and intensive intervention. Intense planning, professional development, and consensus-building activities must begin early in the grant implementation process.

The grant application process is the first step of project implementation. This Request for Applications is designed to elicit the data gathering, needs assessment, reflection, and analysis that are critical to improving reading/language arts instruction.

## Considerations in Applying for REA Subgrants

Districts and schools that wish to participate in the REA must be prepared to make fundamental changes in their current instructional and organizational practice.

This is not tinkering around the edges or making slight adjustments to current instructional strategies. This process will entail substantive changes in schooling that affect curriculum, assessment, professional development, resource allocation, data collection, and other systems.

In applying for an REA subgrant, districts should select schools based upon their recognition of the need for intensive change efforts and their willingness to engage in a curriculum-based change process.

Both districts and schools should be prepared to:

- Re-think current practices and modify or change those that are ineffective based on examination of student data and scientifically-based research in reading;
- Implement the K-3 State Board adopted *English-Language Arts Content Standards* that all children are expected to achieve and the *Reading/Language Arts Framework*;
- Align all components of the K-3 reading program including instruction, materials, assessment, interventions (including tutoring), professional development, and parent education to support classroom practice and implementation of standards;
- Restructure how resources are allocated so that strategic decisions can be made to focus those resources on teaching and learning;
- Examine the organization of both the district and the school and be prepared to make structural changes to improve effectiveness;
- Engage in intensive and ongoing professional development opportunities to improve the skills of teachers in reading instruction for young children;
- Engage in a systematic program of coaching and coaching training; and,
- Gain commitment from K-3 teachers, reading professionals, and especially the school principal, to the time and effort requirements necessary to accelerate reading achievement.

## II. Application Information

### Description of Available Grants

#### There are Two REA Subgrant Programs

A total of \$57 million is available for competitive two-year grants targeted for districts and schools with low reading achievement and high numbers of students in poverty.

#### Local Reading Improvement (LRI) Grants - \$48.3 million available:

These grants are to provide schoolwide literacy planning, professional development for teachers based on best research and practice, support for children entering kindergarten, family literacy, kindergarten/grade one transitions, and extended learning opportunities.

**Funding:** 120 to 130 schools @ up to \$400,000 to be used over a period of two years.

Schools with fewer than 50 students in grades K through 3 should contact the Reading/Language Arts Leadership Office at (916) 323-6269 to discuss an appropriate funding request. Schools with 50 to 100 students in grades K-3 should apply for up to \$150,000; schools with 101 to 200 students in grades K-3 should apply for up to \$300,000, schools with 201 to 600 students in grades K-3 should apply for up to \$400,000. Schools with more than 600 students in grades K-3 should contact Terry Emmett at (916) 323-6269 to discuss an appropriate funding request.

#### Tutorial Assistance Grants (TAG) - \$8.7 million available:

These grants are to provide tutoring options in out-of-school time, including both school-based and non-school-based programs for students in need of additional reading assistance.

**Funding:** 45 to 50 schools @ \$150,000 to \$200,000 to be used over a two year period.

#### Who is Eligible to Apply for LRI Grants?

**Eligible Districts:** All districts that have at least one school identified for Title I Program Improvement; the two districts with the highest or second highest *number* of children counted for Title I in the state; and the two districts with the highest or second highest *percent* of poor children in comparison with other LEAs in the state.

**Eligible Schools:** Eligible districts may submit applications on behalf of schools within their district that serve students in kindergarten through grade three that are participating

in Title I Program Improvement, or that have the highest or second highest *number* of poor children in the district, or have the highest or second highest *percent* of poor children in the district as determined by Title I formulas. Priority points will be given to districts proposing at least one school that has been in Program Improvement for three years.

A complete list of districts and schools eligible for LRI grants is available on the Reading Excellence Act web site at the following address. The final list that will reflect changes due to some schools meeting their API Growth Targets for two years, will be posted by March 1, 2001.

[www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rea/](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rea/)

## **Who is Eligible to Apply for TAG Grants?**

**Eligible districts and schools:** The criteria are the same as for the Local Reading Improvement grants with the addition of districts that have at least one school located in an empowerment zone or enterprise community.

## **Who Submits the Application?**

Eligible districts are responsible for coordinating the application submission process with each eligible school within the district. The application is a collaborative process between the district and the schools applying; it requires the active participation of district staff, the school principal, classroom teachers, and others engaged in reading instruction at the school site. This process discourages the submission of sophisticated applications prepared by skilled grant writers. Because of the nature of the REA program, it is essential that schools that are selected display a commitment and readiness to change existing practice. The application process is designed to elicit a consensus among school staff about the willingness to engage in fundamental change activities.

## **How Many Schools May A District Select To Apply?**

Districts may apply for either the Local Reading Improvement Grant or the Tutorial Assistance Grant, or for both. There is a limit on the number of schools that may participate in each district. Participation is limited to the greater of:

- Two eligible schools
- Twenty percent of the total number of eligible schools

Districts that apply for both grants may select up to two schools or twenty percent of the eligible schools for each grant, but the grants should be requested for different schools. For example, a district with 25 eligible schools could include up to five schools in its application for each grant, for a total of ten schools.

## **On What Factors Should a District Base Its Selection of Schools to Apply?**

In addition to the required eligibility factors described above, districts should select:

- Schools that are not participating in other major change efforts. For example, schools receiving funding under Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) or Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program (IIUSP) Implementation should not apply.
- Schools for which the district is willing to consider leaving the principal in place for the duration of the grant period.
- Schools in which a majority of the staff are willing to actively participate in the application process.

This RFA is designed to engage all members of the school and district who must be involved if this effort is to succeed. Through responses to the various questions they should:

- begin the process of reflective thinking that is important to the change process;
- be engaged in the development of the application and thus must buy-in from the very beginning;
- gain an understanding of what is involved in making substantive improvements in their reading program;
- gain an understanding that the shape and substance of this REA program belongs to them, that they are not passive recipients of what others have deemed to be “good for them” but that they must be actively engaged in its development.

While the schools targeted for this REA program may exhibit a consistent pattern of low student achievement, low morale, high staff turnover, and other signs of disorganization, districts will need to determine those schools that, in the face of many obstacles, have a willingness to change in order to improve student achievement.

## **When Are Applications Due?**

Applications for both LRI and TAG subgrant programs are due no later than May 15, 2001.

## **When Will Awards be Made?**

Successful applicants will be notified approximately June 15, 2001. Funded projects should begin grant activities immediately upon notification of the award. Initial planning and professional development activities should begin in summer 2001.



## **What is the Duration of the Grant Program?**

The grant period extends from June 15, 2001 through June 30, 2003. All funds provided through the REA should be expended by this date; there will be no provisions for extensions or carry-over.

## **Grant Award Appeal Process**

Appeals should be based on the grounds that the California Department of Education failed to correctly apply the standards for reviewing the application as specified in the request for applications. Appeals should be submitted in writing, within 10 days of the initial award notification, to:

William W. Vasey, Director  
Professional Development and Curriculum Support Division  
California Department of Education  
830 S Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Deputy Superintendent of the Curriculum and Instructional Leadership Branch of the California Department of Education will make a final ruling on any appeal.

## **Why Should Districts and Schools Apply for the REA?**

Participating in this project means considering new ways of thinking, accepting challenges to currently held assumptions and beliefs, and confronting the knowledge that current practices are ineffective in reaching student achievement goals. It also means confronting the low expectations and biases that are held for high poverty students and their families. Applicants must experience a desire to change their existing practice in order to bring about improved student achievement. The schools that apply must demonstrate a readiness and a commitment to focus on reading; there must be consensus at the school that instructional improvement is possible and desirable.

The REA presents an unprecedented opportunity for high poverty schools to comprehensively improve reading achievement through a focused, supported literacy effort. These schools cannot bring about reform by themselves; they do not have the time or opportunity to explore new strategies or approaches. Through the California Reading Center and its partners, they will receive external support and resources to re-think their current practice. The REA program is not a new reading program, narrowly focused and added to existing programs and structures. It is an initiative designed to support school and district staff in changing the entire practice of the school to effect improvement in reading.

This Request For Applications is designed to engage all members of the school and district who must be involved if this effort is to succeed.

# III. Implementing the REA in California

## Description of California's REA Program for Local Reading Improvement Subgrants

California's state REA plan is a three-tiered approach:

1. State Level Administration
2. District Level Participation and Leadership
3. School Level Capacity Building

### 1. State Level Administration

#### The California Reading Center

Statewide REA project management is conducted through the California Reading Center (CRC), established in the California Department of Education (CDE), Reading/Language Arts Leadership Office.

Two CRC satellite regional centers are located at the Region XII Southern California Comprehensive Assistance Center and the Region XI Northern California Comprehensive Assistance Center at WestED.

#### Regional Literacy Coordinators

The CRC and its two satellite offices provide twelve Regional Literacy Coordinators to provide support to participating REA districts and schools.

Regional Literacy Coordinators are responsible for:

- Disseminating statewide professional development opportunities;
- Providing professional development in instructional practice and assessment based on scientific research and designed to meet the specific needs of individual schools and districts;
- Supporting school site literacy teams composed of teachers, administrators, and support personnel;
- Coaching and mentoring school personnel to develop their leadership capacity;
- Assisting in data collection and analysis for both local program evaluation and improvement and statewide project evaluation.

## **2. District Level Participation and Leadership**

### **District Literacy Coach**

Each participating REA district with two or more schools is required to hire a District Literacy Coach, a reading and professional development expert to work directly with each of the participating REA schools. The District Literacy Coach works in cooperation with their Regional Literacy Coordinator and the California Reading Center to secure resources and technical assistance from REA project management.

The District Literacy Coach works on-site at REA schools providing in-class coaching and observation, training, and guidance to classroom teachers and the School Site Literacy Coach. The District Literacy Coach also works collaboratively with a school site Literacy Team to build the capacity of the school to institutionalize and sustain its reading improvement efforts.

### **K-3 Literacy Plan**

Districts will work with participating schools to develop a preliminary K-3 Literacy Plan for the project, incorporating elements of existing plans as appropriate. The plan will focus on: professional development in reading; use of scientifically-based reading research in selecting reading instruction content, strategies, and State Board adopted or other appropriate materials; assessment; early interventions; and family literacy. Districts will outline the ways in which they will modify and improve their current practice and operations to provide resources, guidance, and support to participating schools aimed at the effective restructuring of their literacy programs.

Districts currently engage in numerous planning efforts for Title I, school library materials, and other categorical programs. They will use the K-3 Literacy Plan as an opportunity to consolidate and coordinate the literacy components of these various plans.

District support may be uniformly planned for all participating schools, or may be site-dependent, based on a school's needs. Collaboration with participating schools is essential to determine the most appropriate support. Schools must conduct additional planning conversations with the district and at their sites to develop their own K-3 literacy implementation plan that will work in conjunction with the district's plan. (See School Level Participation)

Issues that should be considered in developing the Literacy Plan include:

- Requirements that all reading program(s) (including training, curriculum, materials, instructional support and interventions) are based on State Board adopted *English-Language Arts Standards* and scientifically-based research on reading, and that experts in the reading program(s) be enlisted to help the district and participating schools;

- Improving classroom instruction through targeted professional development;
- Providing family literacy services to enable parents to be their child's first literacy teacher;
- Identifying kindergarten students whose difficulties in reading make the transition to first grade problematic and the process for assisting those students to learn to read by the end of first grade;
- Extending learning opportunities for students through tutoring and supplemental assistance tied to classroom instruction but delivered during non-class times;
- Involving parents in the education of their children;
- Identifying instructional strategies and methodologies and providing a continuum of early literacy intervention for use with students who: are English learners; may be at-risk of being referred for special education, or who have been referred but have not been found to possess learning disabilities.
- Developing reading and library programs that provide access to engaging reading material;
- Reallocating and coordinating funding from a variety of sources including Title I, EIA-LEP, SCE, SIP, school library, etc. with REA funding to improve existing programs;
- Developing a partnership with a community based organization of demonstrated effectiveness in the areas of reading readiness, reading achievement for children and adults (such as a Head Start or tutoring programs) family literacy, or public library programs to help carry out the mission of the plan; and,
- Selecting leadership personnel, including selecting and maintaining the School Site Literacy Team (s), the School Literacy Coordinator, and the District Literacy Coach.

### **Mandated Professional Development**

Both the federal Reading Excellence Act and California's implementation of the REA program are fairly directive in the components that participants must include in their subgrant applications. The following professional development opportunities are mandatory for schools and districts receiving REA grant awards:

- California Professional Development Institutes (CPDI). In 1999, as part of educational reform legislation introduced by Governor Gray Davis, the CPDI were established to provide intensive reading instruction for K-3 teachers. The CPDI provide a five-day summer institute for teams from schools, 80 hours of follow up during the school year including workshops, data collection, and program evaluation. Schools participating in the REA will be required to send teams to the CPDI for reading during the first summer of REA implementation.

**If schools have already participated in the CPDI, they must participate in second level training provided by either the CPDI or the Reading Success Network during the first summer of program implementation.**

- The Reading Success Network (RSN). The RSN uses research-based reading strategies, diagnostic and assessment instruments, and strategies to use data for

instructional decision making. Disseminated by the Region XII Southern California Comprehensive Assistance Center and the Region XI Northern California Comprehensive Assistance Center at WestEd, The RSN will provide coaching training and assistance to REA project participants; reading assessment and data analysis workshops; early intervention and alternative assessment strategies; and on-going training and discussion time for principals. The RSN provides the Regional Literacy Coordinators for the project and staff for the two CRC Satellite Offices.

Each district receiving a REA subgrant is required to partially fund the Regional Literacy Coordinator working with that district and its participating schools. The district may use REA grant funds or other professional development resources. Each district is required to budget \$15,000 for the Regional Literacy Coordinator.

### **Scientifically-Based Research in Reading**

Districts must assist schools in using scientifically-based research in reading to: examine current reading programs and materials; to select new or additional programs and materials; to select and implement professional development for teachers; and to train tutors, parents, and others.

### **Examine Allocation of Resources**

Districts will need to examine the current allocation of resources from various federal and state sources that can be used to focus on K-3 reading; coordinate these resources; and redirect some or all of them if necessary. For instance, it may be necessary to redirect Title I funds from hiring classroom aides to funding ongoing professional development opportunities including school site literacy coaches. As another example, it might be appropriate to align funds from after-school tutoring programs, Pupil Promotion and Retention funding, and English Language and Intensive Literacy funds with LRI funding to create a well coordinated tutoring program that meets student needs.

### **Partnership with a Community-Based Organization**

Districts are required to form a partnership with at least one community-based organization of demonstrated effectiveness in early childhood literacy and reading readiness, reading instruction, and reading achievement. Partnerships may address family literacy, tutoring, library support, and a variety of other school needs.

### 3. School Level Participation

#### School Literacy Teams

In order to build the capacity of high-poverty, low-performing schools to implement and sustain improvement efforts in reading instruction, each school will create a literacy team composed of:

- A teacher from each grade level, kindergarten through third;
- The principal;
- The reading specialist or other program specialist;
- A teacher from each grade level in the school beyond third grade;
- School library staff; and,
- Other instructional or administrative staff deemed necessary by the school.

The presence of a team at each school campus is designed to maintain continuity of the reading instructional program. Low-performing schools are often marked by: high states of flux and turmoil; high turnover rates of both teachers and administrators; high mobility rates of students; and large numbers of new or inexperienced teachers. A Literacy Team can institutionalize the philosophy, goals, objectives, and strategies of a scientifically-based approach to reading instruction.

The major activities of the Literacy Team are:

- To develop a site K-3 literacy plan within the first quarter of the grant period which complements and works in coordination with the district K-3 literacy plan, but which addresses site specific needs. A template will be provided to grantees;
- To select and maintain a balanced, comprehensive reading instruction program based on the *Reading/Language Arts Framework* and *English-Language Arts Content Standards*;
- To engage in professional development activities designed to enhance their knowledge and skills in teaching reading;
- To serve as mentors to other classroom teachers in the area of reading;
- To provide professional development and assistance to instructional staff in an ongoing manner, either formally in workshops and by developing a professional development plan, or informally in classrooms, staff meetings, small discussion groups and through peer coaching;
- To open their classrooms for visits and observations by other teachers and instructional staff as part of their professional development activities;
- To assist in the selection of reading instructional materials for students; and,
- To work with the principal and other school administrators to align the school's organizational structure to maximize the use of time and resources to support student learning and teacher collaboration, planning, and professional growth.

School Literacy Teams are essential in helping schools to organize in order to assure that all students can read by the end of third grade. A collaborative team of teachers,

administrators, and other instructional staff can increase the capacity of a school to work together in forming and maintaining a common purpose in terms of reading instruction.

### **School Site Literacy Coordinator**

Each participating school will select a Literacy Coordinator. It is anticipated that this position will evolve from the Literacy Team. Each school will develop its own procedure for selecting a Literacy Coordinator. The duties are:

- Facilitate the planning and implementation efforts of the Literacy Team;
- Facilitate the implementation of specific aspects of the Local Reading Improvement program, such as tutoring, family literacy activities, or improved library services;
- Function as a coach and mentor for teachers implementing reading instructional strategies; and,
- Coordinate assessment and data collection activities.

The School Site Literacy Coordinator could be a Title I resource teacher, reading or program specialist, or a teacher leader.

### **School Site Literacy Leadership—The Principal and Other Instructional Leaders**

The school principal is a major factor in the success or failure of school improvement efforts. Research supports the idea that a strong, involved, and knowledgeable principal is an essential component of school success. While the principal must play a key role in supporting literacy at the school, additional literacy leadership will be needed. The School Site Literacy Coordinator, the reading specialist, Title I resource teacher, and the library media specialist, among others, will provide that literacy leadership by working closely with the principal to increase the capacity of the school to institutionalize early reading improvement.

The principal and the other literacy leaders at a school will be supported through a web page connecting them with other project principals and school site personnel. The web site will feature news, information, policy issues, and a bulletin board for questions and answers and resource sharing.

Effective schools research shows principals who participate in professional development with their staff are better able to ensure successful program implementation efforts at their school. Research has found that the principal's participation in training contributes to the expertise, capacity, and motivation of the school, the most critical elements in successful program implementation.

## IV. Application

### Technical Assistance to Districts in Completing the Application

The California Reading Center will conduct two specific and targeted activities.

1. **Grant Application Workshops.** Districts and schools eligible to apply for REA subgrants will be invited to attend workshops in March 2001 to: learn the goals of REA; gain an understanding of scientifically-based research in reading, including the results of the National Reading Panel report and the fundamentals of *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*; address issues of family literacy and meeting the needs of English learners and students with special needs; and receive specific assistance in addressing the REA subgrant requirements.
2. **Grant Application Technical Assistance.** During April and early May 2001, in collaboration with the Reading Success Network, the CRC will provide technical assistance to districts and schools in developing their REA applications.

## Local Reading Improvement Grants

In developing the application, the district is advised to read carefully the preceding section, Part III. Implementing the REA in California, beginning on page 10. The California model for the REA already establishes a process for meeting a number of the application requirements, especially those related to professional development. In addition, the *English- Language Arts Standards* and *Reading/Language Arts Framework* incorporate important findings of scientifically-based reading research.

### Scored Application Components

#### I. Current District Policies, Practices, and Resources (15 points) (One to three pages)

Provide a detailed analysis of existing district initiatives, requirements, planning efforts and resources that affect K-3 literacy in the schools included in this application. Include the efforts to improve literacy funded through Title I, Even Start, after-school tutoring activities, Miller-Unruh, and other such programs. (A matrix to provide information on various resources is included in the application.)



**Criteria for Scoring for I:** The analysis provides an honest appraisal and a detailed, comprehensive and integrated view of the district factors which currently influence or drive the K-3 literacy programs in participating schools.

## **II. Preliminary K-3 Literacy Plan (40 points) (up to 9 pages)**

The applicant must submit a preliminary K-3 Literacy Plan describing how the various components will be addressed. The plan must include:

- A. How the school district will *work with participating schools* to: select one or more programs of reading instruction (including training, curriculum, materials, instructional support and interventions), developed using scientifically-based reading research, to improve reading instruction by all academic teachers for all children in each of the participant schools; selected by the agency and, where appropriate, for their parents; and secure technical assistance from a person or entity with expertise about the program and its implementation;
- B. How the school district will work with participating schools to assure that professional development activities, based on scientifically-based reading research, on the teaching and assessment of reading will be provided for classroom teachers and other instructional staff;
- C. How the school district will work with participating schools to support or provide family literacy services based on programs such as the Even Start family literacy model which includes early childhood education, interactive parent/child activities, parenting education, and adult literacy training.
- D. How the school district will work with participating schools to support or provide programs and services for kindergarten students who are not ready for the transition to first grade, especially those having difficulty with reading skills;
- E. How the school district will work with participating schools to provide additional support in extended day programs for children preparing to enter kindergarten, and for students in kindergarten through grade three who are experiencing reading difficulty, either before or after school, on weekends, during non-instructional periods of the school day or during the summer, using supervised individuals (including tutors) who have been trained using scientifically-based reading research;
- F. How the school district will work with participating schools in identifying instructional strategies and methodologies for use with children: who are at risk of being referred to special education because of reading difficulties, or who have been evaluated for special education services but have not been identified as being a child with a disability;

G. How the school district will work with participating schools in identifying and implementing instructional strategies and methodologies for use with students who are English learners;

H. How the school district will work with participating schools in identifying and implementing an appropriate continuum of reading interventions for at risk students, including English learners;

I. How the school district will work with participating schools in providing reading and library programs that provide access to engaging reading material;

J. How the school district will work with participating schools to involve parents, tutors, and early childhood education providers in literacy related activities to enhance children's reading program funded by this grant;

K. How the school district will form a partnership with one or more community-based organizations of demonstrated effectiveness in early childhood literacy, reading readiness, reading instruction, and reading achievement for both adults and children (such as Head Start or tutoring programs); family literacy, public library, or adult education program to help carry out the mission of the plan. If it is not feasible to form such a partnership, the application must explain why; and,

L. How the school district and participating schools will select the literacy leadership personnel: the District Literacy Coach, the School Literacy Coordinator and the School Site Literacy Team(s), including the criteria and process for selection and the plan for maintaining involvement.

**Criteria for Scoring II. A-L:** The preliminary K-3 plan demonstrates thoughtful consideration of how each of the plan requirements will be addressed by the district in conjunction with participant schools. Woven throughout the K-3 preliminary plan is ample evidence of:

- Alignment of all components of the plan, including instruction, materials, assessment, intervention, professional development, interventions for students, parent education to support classroom practice, and implementation of standards;
- The high academic standards that are held for all children, including English learners, and that the *English-Language Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools* and the *Reading/Language Arts Framework* are the basis for all reading instruction;
- The effective collection, analysis and use of data to evaluate and drive instruction;
- Significant development of parent involvement and family literacy services; and,
- Collaboration amongst the district, participant schools and community based organizations in the implementation of the plan

### **III. District Budget and Narrative/Justification (10 points)**

**A. (1 to 2 pages)** The applicant district must submit a budget that combines proposed expenditures of participating schools. The budget must identify funding sources and estimated expenditures for each of the major project areas: reading program; professional development; kindergarten to first grade transition; family literacy; and support services. (The district is precluded from taking indirect costs on this grant but may assess a three percent administrative fee. In addition, the costs of supporting a District Reading Coach and Reading Success Network coaches are to be paid from school funds.)

**B. (2 pages)** The applicant must also submit a budget narrative/justification which presents a rationale for the amount and use of funds received under the grant.

Note: Coordination and integration with existing resources and programs is documented within the budget and narrative/justification.

**Criteria for Scoring III. A-B:** Within the budget and justification, it is clear that each requirement of the program has an adequate source of funding. The justification provides a convincing explanation of the appropriateness of expenditures and effectiveness of the overall budget. It is evident from the budget narrative/justification that all sources of funding have been coordinated and integrated to maximize the effects of implementation.

#### **IV. School Portion of the Grant Application (30 points)**

Provide one complete packet for each participating school. Directions and details are contained within the packet:

**Part A:** School Profile

**Part B:** Professional Staff Support

**Part C:** Self Assessment

**Part D:** Initial Implementation Activities

**Part E:** School Budget

**Criteria for Scoring for IV. Parts C-E:** The school packet provides a detailed, comprehensive and integrated view of the state of the current school K-3 literacy programs, a thoughtful discussion of the initial steps needed to improve the program, and a budget which demonstrates allocations from all sources of funding that target an improved reading program.

Scoring Process for School Applications:

- Each school application will be reviewed individually;
- School applications that do not meet a minimum standard will not be considered;
- Remaining applications will be scored as a whole with an overall maximum score of 30 points.

#### **V. Priority Points**

##### **Establishing a Commitment and Demonstrating Readiness to Change (10 points)**

Five (5) priority points will be awarded to applications that include at least one school which has been in Program Improvement for three or more years.

Five (5) priority points will be awarded to districts that send a team of four or more members including both district and school staff to technical assistance workshops held regionally in late March.